

INCREASED TRAINING PROFICIENCY IMPROVES MORALE

ABOUT ARE MANUFACTURING INC. A.R.E. Manufacturing, Inc. (A.R.E.), a contract shop located in Newberg, Oregon, specializes in using high-end CNC machining equipment to manufacture precision components from various materials. Since its founding in 1980, A.R.E. has grown from a small garage to a larger operation with more than 45 employees and a host of equipment, including vertical machining centers, horizontal machining centers with pallet systems, and multi-axis lathes with live tooling.

THE CHALLENGE. A.R.E. has had a long relationship with the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), a NIST MEP affiliate. In 2005, the company partnered with OMEP for Continuous Improvement (Lean) training. A decade later, when A.R.E. realized a gap in their training program, the company reached out to OMEP for further assistance. A.R.E. was struggling to translate and disseminate tribal knowledge to its up-and-coming employees, resulting in issues with quality, productivity, and morale, and leading to high entry-level employee turnover. In 2015, OMEP stepped in to help A.R.E. develop a training program to take entry-level employees to the next level.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Over the course of four months, OMEP and A.R.E. collaborated to implement a structured on-the-job training program called SMART Talent. First, they refined the company's hiring process so that A.R.E. could be confident in its candidate selection. Next, they developed employee skill sets and career pathways to provide employees with a road to success. SMART Talent is different from other structured on-the-job skills training programs because it provides companies with a proven approach to internal training that quickly integrates new employees and develops incumbents. This program builds training into the regular work day, allowing trainers and trainees to see immediate results, and increase their confidence.

A.R.E. has seen a remarkable difference since implementing the SMART Talent program, including a significant reduction in non-value added activities due to the standardization of current processes. The next steps for this collaboration will be to integrate SMART Talent into A.R.E.'s company culture, standardize training procedures across products and processes, and empower employees to continue to develop and sustain the program. A.R.E. is benefiting from a larger entry-level hiring pool, and the company expects to see a dramatic improvement in employee proficiency.

"OMEP's continued involvement is vital to our success and the development of manufacturing practices necessary to compete in the global economy. I believe that OMEP's program is critical to the success of manufacturing in the State of Oregon. Domestic manufacturers provide living wage jobs and organizations such as OMEP are essential in keeping manufacturing alive and well in the US."

-Alvin Elbert, President

RESULTS



25% reduction in non-value added activities



30% increase in the entry-level hiring pool



Projected **50%** improvement in employee proficiency

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